

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested. Claims 4 and 5 are pending, Claims 1-3 having been canceled, and Claims 4 and 5 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 4 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter; Claims 1-2 were rejected as being unpatentable under 35 USC §103(a) over Grand et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,222,963); Claim 3 was also rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Grand in view of Inoue et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,546,483). The Office Action did not mention Claim 5.

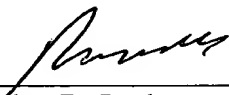
Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter. In view of the indication of the allowable subject matter contained in Claim 4, Claim 4 has been written in independent form, including all of the features from Claim 1 (which is now canceled). Claim 5 was amended to depend from Claim 4. Accordingly, it is believed that no further issues remain in the present case, and thus the present application is in condition for formal allowance. Applicants respectfully request an official action that acknowledges the case is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220



Bradley D. Lytle
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 40,073